



The People Give God Thanks

(based on Exodus 35:20–29)

The Hebrew people had left slavery behind and were headed to a new home. They walked and walked through the desert for many years. On their journey, they lived in tents. But God had no tent. Moses prepared the people to build a special tent for God. It would be called a tabernacle.

The tabernacle would be exquisite. The Ark of the Covenant could be put inside. Whenever the people set out for another part of their long journey, the tabernacle could be packed up and carried with them.

God told Moses to ask the people for gifts to make the tabernacle a beautiful place. So Moses went to the people and asked them to help make the tabernacle.

“We need to make it beautiful for God,” he said.

The people remembered what God had done for them. They wanted to say thank you.

One by one people brought their gifts to help make the tent special for God. Some gave gold and silver. Others brought shining gems. The tabernacle would look magnificent.

Some brought their best yarn. Others wove beautiful materials to make the tent. Still others bought acacia wood for building. They also bought spices and oil for the lamps and sweet-smelling incense.

As the materials arrived, Moses told the workers to begin. All kinds of craftspeople were needed. Lots of people volunteered to help.

The people kept bringing more and more gifts. In the end, Moses had to ask them to stop, because they had everything they needed to make the tabernacle.

The special tent was finished. It was ready to use.

Moses and his helpers set up the tabernacle in the middle of the camp. Everyone could see it. It was gorgeous.

The people were jubilant. They brought their gifts to thank God for God’s grace. Now the people’s gifts had been made into a beautiful tent for God. The tabernacle was another reminder that God was always with them.



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Use one or more activities from each section to explore grace and gratitude with your children this week.

Recognizing God's Grace

- Read and enjoy the story with your children—imagine and wonder.
- This story provides a wonderful opportunity to explore how we can say “thank you” with both words and actions.
- Wonder how your congregation’s place for worship is like the tabernacle of long ago. Point out that both places are where people sing praises to God, hear the Bible read, listen to sermons, and pray to God. Explain that many people helped make the worship space a beautiful place. Some people gave money to buy things; some people helped build the sanctuary or made things for it. Point out things you know people in your congregation have made or given, such as banners or candlesticks.



Responding to God's Grace

- Name some of the gifts your family members have that could make something “beautiful for God.”
- Print the letters *T-A-B-E-R-N-A-C-L-E* down the left-hand side of a sheet of paper. Print words beginning with each letter that describe today’s story in some way. For example, *T* could be “tent of meeting,” *A* could be “Ark of the Covenant,” and so on.
- Think about the offerings you share with others. To move the focus away from only gifts of money, mention that we can all share our time and talents to help others. Name some non-material things you give to others. Write or draw these on note cards and place them in envelopes. Place the envelopes in a basket, and place the basket where all will see it. Say a prayer of thanks to God.

Celebrating in Gratitude

- Plan together for something that your family can give to the church. What can you plan to share? Some ideas are a box of crayons for another class, packages of grain or cereal for the church pantry, and a book. The gifts may be brought to the church next Sunday.
- Pray this way during the week:

Light incense and place it in a holder. In biblical times, incense was often used in worship. The beautiful scent reminded people of the beauty and wonder of God. The smoke rising to heaven helped people to imagine their prayers rising up to God.

Share one glad thing and one sad thing. Respond to each share with the words, “Our prayers rise like incense, O God.”